

**THE NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION****REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)
(WITHOUT FINANCIAL QUOTE)****HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY TEST CENTERS****APPLICATION PERIOD: MARCH 1, 2015 THROUGH FEBRUARY 29, 2016****INSTRUCTIONS:**

Please use this specialized Microsoft® Word document for your response.

If you are viewing it on the Internet, be sure to *save* it to your computer.

Responses may be typed into fill-in areas *only*:

These areas will automatically expand, as needed, to accommodate text.

Some questions (e.g., Yes / No) require clicking on boxes, which look like: ☐

To begin, you may wish to enter the *Name of Applying Entity* onto **Form A**.

The New Jersey State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, religion, creed, disability, marital status, veteran status, national origin, race, gender, genetic predisposition or carrier status, or sexual orientation in its educational programs, services and activities.

1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION**1.1 PROGRAM SUMMARY**

The New Jersey State Department of Education ("NJDOE" or "Department"), as part of its plan to change the way adults can earn a State-issued high school diploma, is soliciting qualification proposals for High School Equivalency Test Centers that are private non-profit and private for-profit entities. **THIS SOLICITATION WILL NOT RESULT IN A CONTRACT WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.** The NJDOE will use the objective criteria specified within to review such proposals and will add any Test Centers approved under this RFQ to the existing Department list of approved Test Centers, which currently consists only of public agencies and institutions. Under this RFQ, the Test Center will be approved to administer any of the tests listed on the Approved Test Vendor list. All approved Test Centers which meet the criteria specified in this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will be included on this list. The list will be maintained by the NJDOE. No NJDOE funding or payments are directly associated with this application for approval.

There will be one initial notification of this RFQ. Applications will be received in response to this notification until the NJDOE determines that there are a sufficient number of approved Test Centers. If a Test Center that applies is found ineligible, the NJDOE will provide a plan on how the Test Center can become eligible, and the Test Center will then be able to reapply at any time. Test Centers that administer a High School Equivalency Assessment may also be removed from the list subject to the conditions specified within for non-compliance with the requirements of this RFQ or failure to comply with the regulations of the Test Vendor.

2.0 SPECIFICATIONS

2.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

This RFQ solicits submissions of applications from any interested private entity which is seeking to become an approved Test Center to administer high school equivalency testing, and to be placed on the Department's list of *Approved High School Equivalency Test Centers*. **Such Test Centers may only contract with a High School Equivalency Assessment Provider on the approved list of Test Vendors.** Entities proposing that their Test Center be approved by the Department must complete the High School Equivalency Assessment Providers Technical Proposal found at the end of this application (Form A) and submit all required documentation in order for the Test Center to be reviewed for approval.

2.2 APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY ASSESSMENTS

A Test Center will be included on the Department's approved list upon determination that an application satisfies each of the following seven criteria. Respondents to this RFQ shall provide documentation that their high school equivalency testing center can meet or exceed each of these seven criteria.

1. Provide evidence, with details of experience, of the capacity to administer large scale testing.
2. Provide evidence of at least two test administrations monthly and, provides an annual list of testing dates and times.
3. Provide a list of all Test Center personnel, including title, duties, contact info and proof of completing test vendor examiner certification. List to include 1 chief examiner and proctor to student ratio of 1/10. If these positions are not yet filled a detailed recruitment and training plan must be provided.
4. Provide a plan on how the Test Center will make information available to test takers, including how to register for the test, test dates and all other pertinent information that a student will need to bring to the Test Center on the day of testing.
5. Provide how the test center will maintain control over the confidential and sensitive information, such as names, social security numbers, dates of birth and addresses that the center collects as well as the information that it is given including, but not limited to documents, reports, files and data analyses.

6. Provide how the test center will keep sensitive information in a secure location.
7. Provide how all such information shall be kept in a manner that maintains test integrity and student confidentiality and shall comply with laws and regulations governing the confidentiality of student records as detailed in The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

2.3 APPROVAL PERIOD FOR HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY TEST CENTERS

A High School Equivalency Test Center that is placed on the approved list shall remain on the list for a period of five years unless the assessment is disqualified pursuant to Section 2.4 of this RFQ.

The Test Center must ensure that it meets the requirements of both the NJDOE and the Test Vendor with whom they have contracted in order to remain on the approved list. The Test Center must ensure test confidentiality and provide appropriate environment for test taking.

2.4 DISQUALIFICATION OF TEST CENTER

Approval for inclusion on the Department's *List of Approved High School Equivalency Test Centers* may be withdrawn for good cause. This may include, but not be limited to, a recommendation to and determination made by the Commissioner that the Test Center: is in noncompliance with one or more of the criteria for approval set forth in this RFQ, or is in noncompliance with the Department's regulations.

Additional disqualifiers would include any use, sale or offering of testing data in any form (except as otherwise provided in this RFQ) by the Test Center or any individual or entity in the Test Center's charge or employ for personal gain, or release or disseminate or publish such information prior to the completion of the project.

2.5 APPLICANT REVIEW PROCESS

General Review and Scoring Process

Applications will each be independently reviewed and evaluated by members of the Review Committee pursuant to the approval criteria specified below.

Applicant responses on Form B of the Technical Proposal (Section 4.0) will be used to determine the Test Center's adherence to the established approval criteria.

For each established criterion, an applicant will receive either a score of:

- 2 – Evidence provided meets the established criterion; or*
- 1 – Evidence partially meets the established criterion; or*
- 0 - Evidence provided does not meet the established criterion.*

High School Equivalency Test Center (Review and Scoring)

In order to be approved as an eligible High School Equivalency Test Center, an applicant must receive a score of at least 2 in *each* of the 7 approval criterion, including sub-criteria, below from official reviewers. Each assessment must receive a total of 14 points in order to be approved for the Department's list of *Approved High School Equivalency assessment providers*. Approved assessment Test Centers will be placed on the Department's list of *Adult Education Test Centers* found on the website: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/adulted/cp/centers.htm> Applicants scoring a 0 or 1 in any of the 7 criteria listed will be notified of the reason for that score.

2.6 RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

NJDOE reserves the right to: (1) reject any or all proposals received in response to the RFQ; (2) withdraw the RFQ at any time, at the agency's sole discretion; (3) seek clarifications of applications; (4) use application information obtained through the state's investigation of a provider's qualifications, experience, ability, or financial standing, and any material or information submitted by the provider in response to the agency's request for clarifying information in the course of evaluation and/or selection under the RFQ; (5) during the application period, amend the RFQ specifications to correct errors or oversights, or to supply additional information, as it becomes available; (6) during the application period, direct providers to submit application modifications addressing subsequent RFQ amendments; (7) change any of the scheduled dates; (8) require clarification at any time during the qualification process and/or require correction of arithmetic or other apparent errors for the purpose of assuring a full and complete understanding of a provider's application and/or to determine a provider's compliance with the requirements of the RFQ; (9) request accurate and current estimates of provider costs.

Submission of or receipt by the NJDOE of applications confers no rights upon the provider nor obligates the NJDOE in any manner.

3.0 APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Applicants should be advised that any information found in this application considered to be proprietary in nature should be marked accordingly as information contained in this application is subject to public release.

3.1 APPLICATION TIMELINE

All applicants shall submit all required materials to the New Jersey Department of Education at the address listed below.

For all applications received, the NJDOE will send notifications of receipt immediately via email, and a determination letter via US mail within 60 days of the receipt of the application.

3.2 APPLICATION SUBMISSION METHOD

Facsimiles and emailed submissions are not acceptable. Applicants must adhere to the submission method detailed below.

Acceptable Submission Method:

Address or hand-deliver an application packet containing:

- 1. One original application in paper; and**
- 2. Two paper copies of the application**

to the following address:

New Jersey Department of Education
100 River View Plaza
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0500

ATTENTION: Larry Breeden, Adult Education

Any questions concerning this RFQ must be emailed to: AdultEd_Info@doe.state.nj.us. (NOTE: PLEASE NOTE THE ‘UNDERSCORE’ CHARACTER BETWEEN ‘ADULTED’ AND ‘INFO’ IN THE EMAIL ADDRESS. THIS EMAIL ADDRESS IS FOR QUESTIONS ONLY; DO NOT SUBMIT APPLICATION MATERIALS TO THIS ADDRESS.) Questions must be received via email. Questions and Department responses will be posted within 5 business days of the RFQ response submission at the NJ Adult Education website (<http://www.nj.gov/education/students/adulted/rfq.htm/>) .

- For questions about the submission of the RFQ please email AdultEd_Info@doe.state.nj.us. The Adult Education Administrator will be able to answer general questions such as confirmation of receipt and processing times.

3.3 APPLICATION PACKAGE FORMAT

- All information should be submitted in the order indicated on the forms and in the instructions.
- Font size should be no smaller than 12 pt.
- The total number of pages in the Technical Proposal is limited to 25 pages, single spaced, if submitted as a stand-alone document (each page can be used in its entirety for your response).
- Appendices/Attachments are not included in the page maximums listed above and may contain resumes, letters of reference, printed brochures describing the services provided, certificates of incorporation or other legal documents, fiscal documents, tables, charts, graphs, scanned images, or photocopies.
- The *Transmittal Letter* requires an authorized signature and therefore **MUST** be submitted via mail or hand-delivery. The original of each of these documents should be signed in **BLACK OR BLUE INK**.

3.4 APPLICATION PACKAGE CHECKLIST

Please use the checklist below to ensure that you have submitted all required materials in the required format:

Submitted?	Component	Requirement/Format
<input type="checkbox"/>	Transmittal Letter	An authorized individual must write a brief Transmittal Letter to formally submit/transmit the application, proposal, and other materials, on behalf of the applying entity, to the New Jersey Department of Education. The transmittal letter must be signed and dated by the authorized individual in black/blue ink.
<input type="checkbox"/>	FORM A	The applicant must complete an Application .
<input type="checkbox"/>	FORM B	The applicant must submit a Plan/Narrative .
<input type="checkbox"/>	FORM C	The applicant should complete a Request for Exemption from Open Public Records Act .
<input type="checkbox"/>	FORM D	The applicant should complete a Statement of Assurances
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appendices/ Attachments	The applicant must provide appropriate Appendices/Attachments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Supporting documentation (Graphs or charts demonstrating achievement, etc.)

4.0 TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

In the Technical Proposal, applicants must describe in detail the *High School Equivalency Test Center* they are submitting for approval. The Technical Proposal, which will be reviewed by the New Jersey Department of Education Review Committee, is described below.

The Technical Proposal is divided into five sections:

Section I – Application (Form A)

In this section, the applicant shall complete the Technical Proposal Application Form.

Section II – High School Equivalency Assessment Narrative (Form B)

In this section, the applicant shall describe in detail the nature of the *High School Equivalency Test Center's plan to provide* services to the test taker.

Section III – Request for Exemption from Disclosure Pursuant to the Open Public Records Act (Form C)

The applicant must complete a **Request for Exemption** form in order to identify any proprietary materials submitted as part of, or in support of, an applicant's proposal, which applicant considers confidential or otherwise exempted from disclosure under the Open Public Records Act.

Section IV– High School Equivalency Assessment Test Center- Statement of Assurances (Form D)

Section V – Appendices

The applicant will provide any supporting documentation that has been requested in this RFQ or which has been referenced by the provider in the completed Technical Proposal.



High School Equivalency Assessment Providers TECHNICAL PROPOSAL - APPLICATION

Name of Proposing Entity		
Address		
City, State Zip		
Phone		
Fax		
E-mail		
Name and Title of Authorized Contact		
Address (if different from above)		
City, State Zip		
Phone		
Fax		
E-mail (REQUIRED)		
URL (REQUIRED)		
The organization is: (Please indicate by clicking on the appropriate boxes below:)		
Local Educational Agency (LEA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
For-profit corporation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Non-profit corporation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Limited Liability Company (LLC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please specify:



High School Equivalency Test Center TECHNICAL PROPOSAL - NARRATIVE

High School Equivalency Test Center Narrative:

In this section, the applicant must describe in detail the nature of the *High School Equivalency Test Center* services they will provide. **Please be advised that your responses will be thoroughly reviewed and rated on a point-based evaluation system.** We strongly encourage you to be as complete and detailed as possible in your responses. *If you are attaching supporting documentation, please do not simply indicate “see attached” in the response fields.*

Approval Criteria	Please thoroughly describe any evidence to support how your test center meets the criteria with the categories listed.
<i>This Test Center:</i>	
1. Provides evidence, with details of experience, of the capacity to administer large scale testing. (0 to 2 points)	
2. Provides evidence of at least two test administrations monthly and, provides an annual list of testing dates and times. (0 to 2 points)	
3. Provides a list of all Test Center personnel, including title, duties, contact info and proof of completing test vendor examiner certification. List to include 1 chief examiner and proctor to student ratio of 1/10. If these positions are not yet filled a detailed recruitment and training plan must be provided. (0 to 2 points)	
4. Provides a plan on how the Test Center will make information available to test takers, including how to register for the test, test dates and all other pertinent information that a student will need to bring to the Test Center on the day of testing. (0 to 2 points)	

5. Provides how the test center will maintain control over the confidential and sensitive information, such as names, social security numbers, dates of birth and addresses that the center collects as well as the information that it is given including, but not limited to documents, reports, files and data analyses. (0 to 2 points)	
6. Provides how the test center will keep sensitive information in a secure location. (0 to 2 points)	
7. Provides how all such information shall be kept in a manner that maintains test integrity and student confidentiality and shall comply with laws and regulations governing the confidentiality of student records as detailed in The Federal Family Educational Rights And Privacy Act (FERPA). (0 to 2 points)	



Request for Exemption from Disclosure Pursuant to the Right to Know Law

New Jersey Open Public Records Act (OPRA), *N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et. seq.*, and the common law, require that each agency shall make available all records maintained by said agency, except that agencies may deny access to records or portions thereof that fall within the scope of the exceptions listed in OPRA or established under the common law.

Any proprietary materials submitted as part of, or in support of, an applicant's proposal, which applicant considers confidential or otherwise excepted from disclosure under the OPRA or the common law, must be specifically so identified, and the basis for such confidentiality or other exception must be specifically set forth.

Please list **all** such documents for every portion of the proposal on the form below, and include a copy of this document with each separate portion of the proposal. Materials which are not indicated below may be released in their entirety upon request without notice to you.

The submission of any information to the NJDOE by a vendor puts the risk of disclosure on the vendor. Submission of this form does not guarantee that a request for exemption from disclosure will be granted. If necessary, NJDOE will make a determination regarding the requested exemptions, in accordance with the process set forth in OPRA and common law.

Material for which Exemption is Requested	Location / Page Number(s)	Basis for Request



**High School Equivalency Assessment Providers
STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES**

I herby affirm that (name of test center) _____
will provide and adhere to the Technical Proposal Narrative submitted with this RFQ.

Name _____

Signature _____

Title _____

Date _____